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Ulrike Lindner
(Universität der Bundeswehr München)

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Basler Afrika Bibliographien Klosterberg 23 CH 4051 Basel Switzerland

Tel. + 41 61 228 93 33 Fax + 41 61 228 93 30 Email bab@baslerafrika.ch

**Contested concepts of “white” and “native”
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Mixed marriages and the related bans and regulations in German South-West Africa have regularly been the topic of research; articles and books mostly focused on the exceptional regulations in the German colony as well as on the continuities or discontinuities between racial policies in German South-West Africa and the Nazi period.¹ Here, I will concentrate on different aspects: since a number of British citizens, who mostly had originally come from the Cape Colony, lived in the German colony in mixed marriages, they were also affected by the regulations that made mixed marriages illegal and degraded the children of these marriages into “natives” without any rights.² Various interactions between the colonies and the motherlands emerged concerning these cases. An analysis of those interactions and communications allows a new view on the racist regimes in the neighbouring colonial societies and also on the exceptionalism of the German case. One can look at the differing concepts of “white” and “mixed-race” and can address the different modes of implementation of racial policies in British and German colonies. Furthermore, I will show how the affected people tried to negotiate their status between the two colonies, and how they used their rights as British citizens to gain some leeway against the wilfulness of the German authorities. For example, they asked the British consul in German South-West Africa for support, they demanded that their cases would be sent to the Foreign Office. When analysing these exchanges, one can also point at the otherwise hidden agency of mixed-race people.

¹ Cf. Kundrus, Birthe. *Moderne Imperialisten. Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien*. Köln: Böhlau, 2003: 219–284; Kundrus, Birthe. “Von Windhoek nach Nürnberg? Koloniale ‘Mischehenverbote’ und die nationalsozialistische Rassengesetzgebung.” *Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*. Ed. Birthe Kundrus. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus, 2003. 110–131; Essner, Cornelia. “Zwischen Vernunft und Gefühl. Die Reichstagsdebatten von 1912 um die koloniale ‘Rassenmischehe’ und ‘Sexualität’.” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 45 (1997); Schulte-Althoff, Franz-Josef. “Rassenmischung im kolonialen System.” *Historisches Jahrbuch* 109 (1985). 52–94; Becker, Frank. (Ed.) *Rassenmischehen*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2004; Wildenthal, Lora. *German Women for Empire 1884–1945*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001; El-Tayeb, Fatima. “Dangerous Liaisons. Race, Nation, and German Identity.” *Not so Plain as Black and White. Afro-German Culture and History 1890–2000*. Ed. Patricia Mazon, and Steingröver, Reinhild. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005. 27–60; Wildenthal, Lora. “Race, Gender, and the Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire.” *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Ed. Frederick Cooper, and Stoler, Ann Laura. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. 263–283.

² Birthe Kundrus has already pointed at the inconsistencies stemming from the cases that involved British citizens, cf. Kundrus *Imperialisten*, 2003: 266.

The investigation of mixed marriages is part of a larger research project looking at neighbouring African colonies (German South-West Africa and the British Cape Colony; British and German East Africa) and covering the time period between 1884 and World War I. It focuses on British and German perceptions of each other's colonial practices and techniques, on co-operations and demarcations between the two European colonizers. The project builds on research in various German, British, South African and Namibian Archives, as well as on contemporary journals, newspapers and published documents.³

Generally, the project addresses interactions and receptions between the neighbouring colonies, the reception of colonial practices in the own metropole and the cross-reception in the other metropole, using the concept of entangled history.⁴ Thus, I analyse explicitly transnational and transcolonial phenomena. Such a view on colonial interactions is also in line with recent research on the British Empire that emphasizes the character of the Empire as a network.⁵ Furthermore, the time period I am looking at, 1884–1914, was in itself a phase of globalization and growing interconnectedness throughout the world – economically, technically and socially.⁶ On the one hand this new connectedness in Europe and overseas created growing transnational networks and enabled the European states to perceive each others' colonial policy more directly, on the other hand it led to a growing desire to define an own national style as imperial and colonial power. When analysing the encounters of the two colonial powers, these tensions come to the fore and can be addressed in a new way, as will be also seen in the case of mixed marriages.

Mixed-race relationships and miscegenation in colonial societies

Sexual relations between colonial rulers and indigenous people, i.e. mixed marriages, forms of concubinate and generally miscegenation were an important field illustrating the complex processes of separation and transgression between colonized and colonizers that were particularly

³ The research in the UK and Africa was conducted with help of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the German Historical Institute London, whom I would like to thank.

⁴ Cf. for the concept of entangled history Conrad, Sebastian, and Shalini Randeria. "Einleitung Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt." *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*. Ed. Sebastian Conrad, and Randeria, Shalini. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus, 2002. 9–49: 17–22; see for the concept of *histoire croisée* Werner, Michael, and Benedicte Zimmermann. "Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der *histoire croisée* und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen." *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002). 607–636.

⁵ Cf. Thompson, Andrew. "The Power and Privileges of Association: Co-Ethnic Entworks and Economic Life of the British Imperial World." *South African Historical Journal* 56 (2006). 43–59: 44; Lester, Alan. *Imperial Networks. Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain*. London, New York: Routledge, 2001; Dubow, Saul. *A commonwealth of knowledge. Science, sensibility, and white South Africa, 1820 – 2000*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006; Cooper, Frederick. "Networks, Moral Discourse, and History." *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*. Ed. T.M. Callaghy, R. Kassimir, and R. Latham 2001.

⁶ Conrad, Sebastian. *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich*. München: C.H. Beck, 2006. Osterhammel, Jürgen, and Niels P. Petersson. *Geschichte der Globalisierung*. München: C.H. Beck, 2003.

influenced by racist ideas. Reflections on race-mixing between black and white were gaining in importance in racist theories since the mid-19th century. The term “race mixing” did not only imply the fear of sexual contacts between the races but also the fear of their consequences, i.e. of a mixed-race society, which would lead to racial degeneration.⁷ In contrast to the omnipresent theories of race segregation that were combined with the fear of racial degeneration,⁸ those mixed-race relations were common practice and an everyday phenomenon in all African colonies.⁹ In most cases sexual relations existed between European men and African women or women of mixed-race origin. At the beginning of the colonial commitment of the European imperial powers on the African continent it were mostly men who came to the new African colonies and started sexual relations with indigenous women. In many cases those relations gave them access to property and trade relations, which were useful for establishing their business in the colony. This was linked to their idea of colonial manliness as a conqueror and “imperial patriarch“, that is, of a man who naturally dominated socially and racially inferior people in his part of the colony.¹⁰ Those phenomena existed both in German and British African colonies.¹¹

The partners in those relations rarely got married; they mostly lived in illegitimate relations. Children from those relations were normally not admitted any special rights but were treated according to their mother’s rights. The few legitimate relations were regarded as “mixed marriages”, a term which so far had applied mostly to partners belonging to different religions. Since the end of the 19th century this term was also used for marriages between different races i.e. in the cases discussed here for marriages between African women and European men.¹²

As Philippa Levine has pointed out, the relations between a colonized woman and a colonizer did not affect the racial and sexual balance of power.¹³ From the contemporary eugenic point of view those relations were unacceptable but, nevertheless, they confirmed the estab-

⁷ Gilman, Sander. *Rasse, Sexualität und Seuche. Stereotype aus der Innenwelt der westlichen Welt*. Hamburg 1992: 147.

⁸ See Stoler, Ann Laura. “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers. European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia.” *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*. Ed. Frederick Cooper, and Stoler, Ann Laura. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. 198–237: 198.

⁹ Schulte-Althoff 1985: 53.

¹⁰ vgl. Wildenthal 2001: 80, Maß, Sandra. *Weißer Helden, schwarze Krieger. Zur Geschichte kolonialer Männlichkeit in Deutschland 1918 – 1964*. Köln: Böhlau, 2006: 121.

¹¹ Callaway, Helen. *Gender, Culture and Empire. European Women in Colonial Nigeria*. Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987: 4. “Nigeria represented for British colonial officers in Africa an example, perhaps the prime example of a man’s country. This concept had meanings at different levels the most obvious being the man’s job to be done. At the turn of the century, the conquering soldiers and visionary empire-builders of these vast, roadless not yet fully mapped territories had to be men, not boys, and certainly not women.”

¹² See the definition of mixed marriages in the *Deutsche Koloniallexikon*, Schnee, Heinrich. (Ed) *Deutsches Koloniallexikon*, Leipzig 1920, vol. 2: 546.

¹³ Levine, Philippa. “Sexuality, Gender and Empire.” *Gender and Empire*. Ed. Philippa Levine. The Oxford history of the British Empire, Companion series. Oxford [u.a.]: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004. 134–155: 140.

lished type of rule in the colonies that means total control of the indigenous people by the Europeans – also in sexual terms.¹⁴ Since the turn of the century, mixed-race relationships were increasingly regarded as a problem in the African colonies. Theories of dissimilation gained more and more ground in the societies of the mother countries, the concept of a separation of the spheres was then regarded as a sustainable form of colonial rule in Africa. The growing settlers' and planters' societies and the arrival of white women in the colonies had the effect that the question of a greater separation between colonizers and colonized came to the fore. The suppression or at least the regulation of sexual relations between indigenous people and colonizers became one of the most important everyday issues in the colonies. Especially the white wives following their husbands and those white girls who were sent to the colonies to marry white bachelors, were explicitly chosen to transport a European way of life to the colonies and to establish a sort of "white advanced civilization".¹⁵ Those women were particularly interested in a strict separation of sexual contacts in order to protect their own status.¹⁶ In the British settler colony of Rhodesia, for example, women's organizations repeatedly tried to enforce a ban on sexual intercourse between white men and indigenous women, but they were not successful.¹⁷ In Germany one of the most current terms of that time used to describe the problem of miscegenation was "Verkafferung" of those men who lived together with indigenous women, that is to say the social descent of those men to the allegedly lower cultural level of the woman.¹⁸ Those dangers were increasingly put to the fore in the German colonies since the turn of the century, but also in the British African colonies those ideas were more frequently expressed – even in the Cape Colony, that had pursued a more liberal native police to date.¹⁹ The corresponding

¹⁴ Wildenthal 2001: 81

¹⁵ In the contemporary discourse "white" was understood as belonging to the "white race" and was often used as synonym for European.

¹⁶ See as a contemporary record of women's roles in the German colonies in Africa Niessen-Deiters, L. *Die deutsche Frau im Auslande und in den Schutzgebieten*. Berlin 1913; see also Walgenbach, Katharina. "Die weiße Frau als Trägerin deutscher Kultur". *Koloniale Diskurse über Geschlecht, "Rasse" und Klasse im Kaiserreich*. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus, 2005: 125–126; Wildenthal 2001: 131–171; Stoler, Ann. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power. Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002: 33; Gouda, Frances. "Das 'unterlegene' Geschlecht der 'überlegenen' Rasse. Kolonialgeschichte und Geschlechterverhältnisse." *Geschlechterverhältnisse im historischen Wandel*. Ed. Hanna Schissler. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus, 1993. 185–203; Kundrus, Birthe. "Weiblicher Kulturimperialismus. Die imperialistischen Frauenverbände des Kaiserreichs." *Das Kaiserreich transnational*. Ed. Sebastian Conrad, and Osterhammel, Jürgen. Göttingen 2004. 213–235; Smidt, Karen. *Germania führt die deutsche Frau nach Südwest. Auswanderung, Leben und soziale Konflikt deutscher Frauen in der ehemaligen Kolonie Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1884–1920*. 1995.

¹⁷ Kennedy, Dane. *Islands of White. Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia 1890–1939*. Durham 1987: 177.

¹⁸ Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BAB), R 1001/5423, Kaiserlich-Deutsches Gouvernement für Südwestafrika an das Auswärtige Amt Kolonialabteilung, Zulässigkeit von Eheschließungen zwischen Nichteingeborenen und Eingeborenen, 1905, 69.

¹⁹ See for this development Goldin, Ian. "The reconstruction of Coloured identity in the Western Cape." *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa*. Ed. Shula Marks, and Trapido, Stanley. London 1987. 156–181: 161.

keyword used in British colonies was “going native”, which also symbolized the collapse of European standards.²⁰

Sexual relations between black men and white women were considered to be even more problematic since they were not only said to cause racial degeneration, but because they questioned the whole colonial and sexual hierarchy. Although there were only few relations of that kind – given the fact that they were considered absolutely unacceptable in both the colonial societies and in imperialist Europe and only very few couples dared to ignore the rules – the danger of those relations and their assumedly terrible consequences were always pointed out. The contemporary opinion was that a white woman who preferred an inferior black man to the white superior patriarch thus undermined the latter’s authority. At the same time, black men were considered to be sexually aggressive and potent in general, an assumption that also threatened the superiority of the white colonialists.²¹ In many colonial societies these sexual relations were forbidden since the turn of the century, so in various British colonies and the Dutch East Indies. One has to say that these measures mainly aimed at poor white women and white prostitutes who had contact with black men and thus at the lower ranks of white society in the colonies that were seen as a particular danger for upholding white superiority.²²

The racial separation from the colonized had always been a matter of sexual definition. In the colonies gender specific sexual sanctions defined the borders between Europeans and Africans and developed into important mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that were characteristic of the colonial societies.²³ It was discussed again and again where to draw the line between black and white, European and indigenous people, how to classify mixed-race persons, which behaviour in everyday life with indigenous people could be tolerated and which could not.²⁴ In the German colonies the idea of separating colonizers from colonized culminated in the regulations on banning mixed marriages which was introduced in German South-West Africa in 1905, in German East Africa in 1906 and in Samoa in 1912.²⁵ These were the only colonies of a European colonial power – besides the Transvaal – where mixed marriages were generally forbidden, not only for white women, but also for men. Thus the exceptionalism of German marriage bans has drawn much attention in contemporary discussion as well as in current research.

²⁰ Kennedy 1987: 173.

²¹ See for the German colonies El-Tayeb 2005: 48; Stoler 1997: 218–219; see generally Gouda 1993.

²² See for the Dutch East Indies Stoler 2002: 75–76; see for British colonies in Africa Cornwell, G. “George Webb Hardy’s ‘The Black Peril’ and the social meaning of ‘Black Peril’ in early twentieth-century Africa.” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22 (1996): 441–453: 443–444.

²³ Hall, Catherine. “Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century.” *Gender and Empire*. Ed. Philippa Levine. The Oxford history of the British Empire, Companion series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 46–76: 50.

²⁴ Stoler 1997: 198–199; see Frankenberg, Ruth. *White Women, Race Matters. The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis 1993: 236.

²⁵ Kundrus, Imperialisten, 2003: 219.

The legal background for mixed marriages in German South-West Africa and the Cape Colony

If we turn to the subject of mixed marriages in German colonies and especially in German South-West Africa it is clear that the issue of defining oneself against the colonized in Africa became very important especially during and after the Herero and Nama War from 1904–1907. In the German metropole, the “Colonial Society” and the “Pan-German Society” had long been ardent advocates of strict racial segregation, of a new definition of German citizenship and of a general ban of mixed marriages, however this intensified with the challenges of the war.²⁶ At the same time, the presence of African concubines in military homes and in settlements far away from the main administration points was quite common and well documented, even if this was officially despised and seen as a danger to the German nation.²⁷ Despite the widespread occurrence of miscegenation and a growing mixed-race population and despite the low numbers of the actual mixed marriages (only around 50 in the colony), German legislation after 1905 concentrated on mixed marriages in order to prevent a growing mixed-race German population, which meant the prevention of a growing number of “bastards” with German citizenship. Children born of non-marital alliances were automatically treated as “natives” and could not claim German citizenship.

Generally, the German South-West African colony supported an extremely racist radicalization in that time period. The native ordinances of 1907 decreed that neither Africans nor mixed-race persons classified as “natives” could hold land or enjoy freedom of movement. Africans had to wear badges with identification numbers and their residency was strictly regulated. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Herero and Nama War, the administrative position regarding marital as well as non-marital alliances between whites, persons of mixed race and Africans was considerably tightened.²⁸

In 1905, Deputy Governor Tecklenburg forbade all marriages between Africans and whites in the South-West African colony until further notice. In 1907, the high court in Windhoek also pronounced marriages recorded before the prohibition as invalid, thereby assigning “native”

²⁶ See for the contemporary discussion e.g. Friedrich, J. “Die rechtliche Beurteilung der Mischehen nach deutschem Kolonialrecht.” *Koloniale Rundschau* 1 (1909). 361–368; Fleischmann, Max. “Die Mischehen in den deutschen Schutzgebieten vom Rechtsstandpunkte.” *Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongresses 1910 zu Berlin*. Berlin 1910. 548–567; Schulte-Althoff, 1985: 86. See on the racial policies of the Alldeutsche Verein Hering, Rainer. *Konstruierte Nation. Der Alldeutsche Verband 1890 bis 1939*. Hamburg 2003.

²⁷ Schulte-Althoff 1985: 53; Grosse, Pascal. *Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850–1918*. Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus, 2000: 149–150.

²⁸ Trotha, Trutz von. “Zur Entstehung von Recht. Deutsche Kolonialherrschaft und recht im Schutzgebiet Togo 1884–1918.” *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 7 (1988). 317–346, see for the native decrees of 1907 Bley, Helmut. *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894–1914*. Hamburg: Leibniz-Verlag, 1968: 208–212; 257–262; Zimmerer, Jürgen. *Deutsche Herrschaft über Afrikaner. Staatlicher Machtanspruch und Wirklichkeit im kolonialen Namibia*. Münster u.a. 2002: 68–94

status to the children coming from these alliances.²⁹ The German administration also developed especially rigid regulations to demarcate the line between natives and whites and redefined the status of white versus African. The general line was that one African ancestor, even among the great-grandparents, would define you as “native”.³⁰ One outcome of this legislation was, for example, the famous case of the German engineer Baumann, who had been regarded as a white man and was now redefined as a native by a South-West African court in 1913, although he was from a family of white missionaries with only one of his great-grandmothers having been an African woman.³¹

In most of the British African colonies there was no official ban on mixed marriages and no new legal definition of white versus native during the time period I am looking at. Only in the Transvaal with its tradition of Boer native policy mixed marriages were illegal since 1898. In the Union of South Africa these differences prevailed and mixed marriages were still possible in the Cape and the other provinces.³² Before 1900, policy in the Cape Colony towards the black and so called “coloured” mixed-race population was relatively liberal and relied more on class distinction than on race segregation. (The term “coloured” denotes a certain group of the population in South Africa, descending from Boers, indigenous people and East Asian slaves). There was no open racial infringement for the vote: African people could vote if they had certain possessions or a certain income. Since only very few of the black people fulfilled these conditions, the supremacy of white Europeans was never challenged. With the mining revolution and a greater segregation of the workforce, with an increasing coloured population and with a growing white underclass, racial policies became more important in the Cape Colony from 1890 onwards and racial tensions grew. In the 1890s, several bills restricted voting rights for blacks.³³ Segregation started in many fields, in schools, in sports etc., as Vivian Bickford-Smith has shown in his research on Cape Town.³⁴ Mixed marriages were of course socially banned in the higher circles of the Cape Colony. As in German African colonies, concubinate and half-legal marriages were widely practised by members of the British colonial services as well as

²⁹ Kundrus, *Imperialisten*, 2003: 219–223; Bley 1968: 249–256.

³⁰ Essner, Cornelia. “‘Wo Rauch ist, das ist auch Feuer’. Zu den Ansätzen eines Rassenrechts für die deutschen Kolonien.” *Rassendiskriminierung, Kolonialpolitik und ethnisch-nationale Identität*. Ed. Wilfried Wagner. Münster, Hamburg: Lit, 1992: 145–160; see also Sippel, Andreas. “‘Im Interesse des Deutschtums und der weißen Rasse’: Behandlung und Rechtswirkung von ‘Rassenmischehen’ in den Kolonien Deutsch-Ostafrika und Deutsch-Südwestafrika.” *Jahrbuch für afrikanisches Recht* 9 (1995): 123–159.

³¹ BAB, R 1001/5424, *Swakopmunder Zeitung*, 18.3.1913; BAB, R 1001/5424, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Züchtungskunde an den Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes, 21.4.1913, 31–32; see also Kundrus, *Imperialisten*, 2003. 273–274.

³² See Chanock, Martin. *The Making of South African Legal Culture, 1902–1936*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, see also Scully, Pamela. “Rape, Race, and Colonial Culture: the Sexual Politics of Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony, South Africa.” *American Historical Review*, 1995. 335–359.

³³ Edgecombe, D. R. “The Non-racial Franchise in Cape Politics 1853–1910.” *Kleio* 10 (1978). 21–37.

³⁴ Bickford-Smith, Vivian. *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995: 10.

by white traders, railway engineers and unmarried settlers who lived far off the administrative centres.³⁵ This was mainly the case in the new colonies in West and East Africa but was still found at the margins and at the borders of the Cape.

Nevertheless, on the British side as well, the awareness about racial issues grew and the aim to maintain an imperial British race became more important.³⁶ There was an increasing fear that English blood could be corrupted by mixing it with the blood of Africans. In 1902, sexual relations between white women and black men were forbidden in the Cape, mainly aiming at white prostitutes and at the white underclass.³⁷ A general change of policy can be found in 1909: a directive, the so-called Crewe directive was issued which gave for the first time a general rule to discourage concubinate for members of the colonial service, as this would endanger the authority of the colonial administration. Ronald Hyam shows in his book on “Empire and sexuality” that this change in policy was mainly the result of a publicized affair in Kenya, where an assistant district commissioner who took over concubines from his predecessor had roused the contempt of a neighbouring settler. When the British commissioner was only mildly rebuked, the settler published the whole affair in a letter to the Times. However, this was only the trigger for a change in policy. British authorities had also started to turn decisively against mixed-race-relationships.³⁸

Despite the common trend towards segregation, there were still strong differences between Cape politics and the much more racist colonial rule in neighbouring German South-West Africa. This meant that people with roots in the Cape Colony could hardly accept the new infringements introduced by the German government. They fought for their previously enjoyed rights and insisted upon their British citizenship.

Interactions between the colonies

Interactions between the two colonial powers became inevitable through the approximately 20 mixed marriages existing in German South-West Africa that involved British citizens. The women concerned frequently belonged to the “Rehoboth Bastards”, a Christian group of mixed-race people descending from Boer and Nama, who had settled in South-West Africa before the Germans arrived.³⁹ Early settlers in the area tended to marry Christian Rehoboth women, who were regarded as good wives. Many of these couples had only had church weddings, render-

³⁵ Hyam, Ronald. *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990: 158; Callaway 1987: 4.

³⁶ Hyam 1990: 159.

³⁷ Cornwell 1996: 443–444; similar laws were issued in 1903 in Natal and in the Orange Free State.

³⁸ Hyam 1990: 157; Stoecker, Helmuth. “Koloniale Rassendiskriminierung: Das Beispiel Britisch-Westafrika.” *Rassendiskriminierung, Kolonialpolitik und ethnisch-nationale Identität*. Ed. Wilfried Wagner. Münster, Hamburg: LIT, 1992:77–88, 84–87.

³⁹ Essner 1992: 146–147; Kundrus, Imperialisten, 2003: 220.

ing their marriages void under the regulations adopted in 1905. As in the German cases, the offspring of such unions had generally been regarded as white until the passing of the new regulations between 1905 and 1907, but were now redefined as “natives”. This meant that the children might not receive inheritances, it was unclear if they could own land. They were generally subject to severe restrictions to their rights.⁴⁰ Many of the couples concerned thus tried to obtain legal recognition of both their marriage and the capacity of their children to inherit. As soon as children from such unions were categorized as “natives”, they were not allowed to continue the lives they had been leading with their parents in colonial German South-West Africa, instead being reduced to the level of second-class citizens. This applied not only to German, but to British nationals as well. Since a colonial administration could not simply declass citizens of another European nation to become natives, the issue of mixed marriages became a matter of controversy between the colonizers.

Other forms of interaction were brought about by German or British citizens who crossed the border to the Cape Colony to marry under British law, because they had been denied the right to marry in German South-West Africa. Most couples went to Rietfontein, situated in the southeast of the German colony, directly on the other side of the border, or to Walvis Bay, the British enclave in the south-west. There, they could marry without restrictions, but the problems started when they tried to obtain recognition of their marriage in the German colony or have their children entered as Germans or Europeans in the register of births.⁴¹

By rights, the marriages should have been recognized, as the German Reich had acceded to the Hague Marriage Convention of 1902 in the year 1904. The Convention’s object was the mutual recognition of marriages concluded in foreign countries. There were exceptions, however, geared mostly towards states that knew only church weddings and, consequently, were not forced to recognize civil weddings. “Mixed-race marriages”, on the other hand, were not one of the exceptions listed in the Hague Marriage Convention. With the recognition of this convention, Germany had made an international commitment that could not simply be overruled by a colonial administration.⁴² While the German Colonial Office was well aware of this, repeatedly instructing the colonial administration in German South-West Africa to adhere to the international rules, the latter frequently refused to obey these instructions or at least delayed their implementation.⁴³

⁴⁰ Kundrus, *Imperialisten*, 2003: 261.

⁴¹ See for example the case of the Windelberg family. BAB R 1001/5424, Solf, Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes an den Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes, Personenstand von Mischlingen, 30.6.1913.

⁴² See for the Hague convention of 1902 Freiherr von Schwind, Fritz. “Wandlung von Ehe und Familie im Spiegel internationaler Abkommen.” *Festschrift für Günther Beitzke – zum 70. Geburtstag am 26. April 1979*. Ed. Otto Sandrock, and Beitzke, Günther. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979. 721–737: 728–729; Essner 1992: 148.

⁴³ Vgl. for Solf’s attitude towards the question of international recognition of marriages BAB, R 1001/5418, Solf, Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes an den Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes, 18.7.1913, 163–165.

Controversy between the colonizers about “international” marriages started when a British couple protested against the way they were treated by the German colonial power, turning to the British for support. British consul Müller, stationed in Lüderitz Bay in southern South-West Africa since 1909, played a special role in this context. Müller had explicitly been sent there in order to defend British interests in the German colony, being responsible for both European British citizens and African subjects of the British Empire.⁴⁴ Müller was the child of German missionaries and spoke German fluently. He had been raised in the Cape Colony and had worked in the rather liberal administration of the Native Department in Cape Town.⁴⁵ His views were influenced by the policy of John X. Merriman, prime minister of the Cape Colony, who advocated a relatively lenient treatment of the indigenous population and had been one of the few politicians that had stood up for the rights of Africans during the negotiations on the Union of South Africa, even if he was not successful.⁴⁶ With this background, Müller had a critical view of the severe regulations enforced in the German colony. He reported the cases he was informed of both to the Cape Colony and to the Foreign Office in London. It was he who advised the British authorities of the new regulations on marriage and civil status in the German colony.

A typical example of an intervention by Müller is the case of Mrs Fish from Bethanien: she had previously been regarded as British in German South-West Africa and was not prepared to simply accept her redefinition as “native”, instead fighting for the recognition of her status and her marriage with an Englishman. Her new classification also had consequences for her children: her daughter had been about to marry a European, which was now prohibited since according to the new rules, she was suddenly a “native” herself. To obtain permission for her daughter to get married, Mrs Fish now had to prove that her marriage had been legal and she herself was a British citizen.

She began by consulting the Imperial District Office in Keetmanshoop in order to obtain information on her own case. Even this was met with astonishment, since the German administration had not expected such personal initiative. Mrs Fish wanted to know why she had suddenly been classified as a native. After being turned away by the District Office with the reply that she had, in fact, always been “coloured”, she contacted the British consul in Lüderitz Bay. Apparently, she felt that consul Müller would be better suited than herself to defend her interests with the German authorities, thus making full use of the possibilities she had as a British citizen in a German colony. She presented Müller with documents proving that she was the descendent

⁴⁴ Vgl. for Müller’s installation in Lüderitzbucht National Archives of Namibia, Windhoek, (NAN), ZBU 136 A IV B 3, Kaiserliches Gouvernement für Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Britisches Konsulat in Lüderitzbucht, 1911–1914.

⁴⁵ See for Müller also BAB, R 1001/2189, Reichskolonialamt, Vertretung fremder Staaten in Deutsch-Südwestafrika, 1909; Cape Town Archives Repository, GH 35/150, Consul Müller in Lüderitzbucht, December 1909.

⁴⁶ See for Merriman’s policy Lewsen, Phyllis. “Merriman as last Cape Prime Minister.” *South African Historical Journal* 7 (1975). 62–87; see for Müller and Merriman their correspondences in Cape Town Archives Repository, GH 35/150, also Lewsen 1975: 78.

of Germans that had settled in the Cape region and stated that she herself had been married to an Englishman, thus possessing British citizenship.⁴⁷ As a result, consul Müller wrote to the imperial administration in Windhoek, requesting a review of the case. The German side reacted by making inquiries, which finally led to the representative of the Imperial District Office, von Roebern, writing to Windhoek on 18 December 1911 that Mrs Fish had indeed been regarded as a British subject. Her documents must have been convincing, as the colonial administration subsequently instructed the District Office in Bethanien to recognize the citizenship and the marriage of Mrs Fish; a corresponding certificate was issued.⁴⁸ Whether Mrs Fish's daughter had actually been allowed to marry the European is unfortunately not in the files. It is, however, likely, since with the recognition of the marriage, the daughter, too, had obtained the status of a British woman.

In the meantime, the Foreign Office in London had received several cases submitted by consul Müller, in which the rights of British citizens in German South-West Africa had been restricted. The British government thus considered it necessary to issue an official statement regarding the situation. The British ambassador in Berlin, Sir Edward Goschen, consequently wrote to the German Foreign Office in October 1912:

His Majesty's Government consider it is desirable that no British subject who had the status of a white man when the Protectorate was taken over by the German Government should be reduced to the status of a native, and that the legitimate children of such British subjects should be entitled to the same status as their father.⁴⁹

This official position resulted in a more cautious treatment of such matters by the German authorities where British agencies intervened. At least the German Colonial Office was careful to honour international commitments. In cases where courts in South-West Africa had already annulled marriages and changed the status of British citizens, Colonial Secretary Wilhelm Solf himself intervened several times, instructing the local administration to reverse their decisions.⁵⁰ If affected persons complained, especially if they turned to the British consul, the cases thus obtaining an international character, the marriages were mostly recognized. Regarding the recognition of the children, the situation was less clear. In most of the cases, the authorities in South-West Africa wanted to take a tougher stance, while the Colonial Office was more considerate.

⁴⁷ NAN, ZBU 666 F IV R 2, Bd 1 Müller, British Consul for GSWA, Lüderitzbucht, an das Kaiserliche Gouvernement Windhuk, 14.7.1911, 107–108.

⁴⁸ NAN, ZBU 666 F IV R 2, Bescheinigung, 128.

⁴⁹ BAB, R 1001/5417, Granville an Kiderlen-Waechter, Note über die Behandlung von britischen Subjekten nach dem Rassenmischgesetzen der Deutschen, 11.10.1912, 259.

⁵⁰ BAB, R 1001/5418, Auswärtiges Amt an den Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes, "Über das Personenstands- und Mischehenrecht in den deutschen Schutzgebieten in Bezug auf englische Staatsbürger, Briefwechsel." 23.8.1913 see also R 1001/5417, Urteil über Eheschließung zwischen farbiger Engländerin und Deutschem, 10.11.1909, 59. In this case the plaintiff was a British citizen, however she was categorized as native by the German government.

The arbitrariness of the decisions is illustrated by the example of the Windelberg family. The case in point was a marriage in the British colony, which should by rights have been recognized by the Germans. The German citizen Windelberg wanted to marry a woman that was, according to German doctrine, classified as a “native”, but was regarded as a European in the Cape Colony. The responsible German administrative official refused to marry the couple, as a result of which they went over to Rietfontein in the Cape Colony and got married in 1907. According to British law, this presented no problem. Subsequently, the South-West African administration refused to enter the children of the now married couple in the register of birth. The couple turned to the British consul in German South-West Africa, who lodged a protest. Following another statement by the Foreign Office, Solf himself intervened, confirming that the children were, in fact, Germans in accordance with international law, since the marriage was legal under British law.⁵¹ This instruction was sent to South-West Africa but refused by Governor Seitz, who replied indignantly that he was not going to comply. He listed a number of reasons why this was not possible. For one, the white population was never going to accept equal treatment of “mixed-race” people and would fiercely reject such “false” whites. Secondly, he pointed out the – in his opinion, irrefutable – fact that “mixed-race” persons take after their mothers, “the native blood unmistakably breaking through”⁵². Seitz went on to claim that the fact that children from such marriages were worse off legally was, at that moment, the best way to deter white men. He thought that it would prevent them from crossing the border to Rietfontein or Walvis Bay in order to marry “mixed-race”, non-European women. Should, in the case of Windelberg, this restriction be lifted, Seitz feared that the entire “good government policy of protecting racial purity” would be endangered. He thus considered the entry of the Windelberg children into the register of births to be a crucial issue for the future of the German colony. He asked Solf to re-examine the case, even insisting that he should bring about a decision by the Imperial Chancellor.⁵³ There is no further correspondence to be found on this case. It is likely that the matter of the registration of the Windelberg children had not been settled at the onset of World War I.

The controversy about the marriage of Agnes Bowe and German Oswald Schubert, in contrast, was settled in favour of the Bowe/Schubert family. Agnes Bowe was the daughter of Katharina Cloete, from the group of “Rehoboth Bastards”, and Bowe, an Englishman. Her parents had had a church wedding in 1879. Agnes Bowe had married the German Oswald Schubert in church and at the register. The marriage had been authorized since Agnes Bowe was a Brit-

⁵¹ BAB R 1001/5424, Solf Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes an den Staatssekretär des Auswärtigen Amtes, Personenstand von Mischlingen, 30.6.1913.

⁵² NAN, ZBU 666 F IV R1 Bd. 1, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Windhuk an den Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes Berlin, 12.8.1913, 157–161.

⁵³ NAN, ZBU 666 F IV R 1 Bd. 1, Kaiserliches Gouvernement Windhuk an den Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes Berlin, 12.8.1913, 157–161.

ish citizen. The child from this union, however, was subsequently banned from being entered in the register of births. All of a sudden, the German authorities questioned the legitimacy of Agnes' parents' marriage. In this case, upon intervention of consul Müller, an official inquiry was made to the British government as to whether the church wedding in 1879 should be considered legitimate.⁵⁴ The British government confirmed the legitimacy of the parents' marriage. Colonial Secretary Solf stated that based on this legal marriage, both Katharina Cloete and her daughter Agnes were British citizens and thus to be treated as citizens of a foreign country and not as natives.⁵⁵ The intervention of the British consul and the Foreign Office were obviously successful.⁵⁶

An interesting example for the contested and insecure demarcation lines between white and black is the Hill family and their "bastardization".⁵⁷ Charles Hill, an English farmer coming from the Cape Colony, bought a huge farm from the indigenous Bondelzwarts in the 1870s in South-West Africa and married the daughter of a German missionary by a mixed-race wife. When Hill died he left a farm of some 500,000 acres to his seven children. This was a huge estate, even in Namibian terms. The children were brought up as white persons and received a "good education". The fiscus of German South-West Africa went to court against the Hills and tried to reduce the estate in order to receive land for a military station. However, the court ruled that the Hill children who had had the status of British subjects and white people were in fact to be classed as natives. The court would be therefore not competent to rule in this case. The case remained undecided. Finally, the Hill heirs engaged lawyers and sued the German fiscus for identification of their estate, they won the law-suit and were ascertained as owners of their estate as the old contracts between Charles Hill and Nama captains from the 1870s were declared as valid. The British consul had also intervened for the Hills. Müller commented on the matter: "The children of British subjects who had married in accordance with English or Cape colonial law and were resident in German South-West Africa before the Germans took it over, have been degraded to the ranks of aborigines, whose legal status is as low as it is possible to be short of slavery."⁵⁸ The German military had even to remove some barracks from the Hill's land.

Agnes Hill had represented the community of heirs during the trials, she conducted the correspondence with the German authorities, lawyers, the British consul and the family. She

⁵⁴ BAB, R 1001/5418, Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes an den Gouverneur in Windhuk, Eheschließung zwischen britischen Mischlingen und deutschen Personen in den Kolonien, 5.7.1913, 168–169; see for the Bowe/Schubert case also Kundrus, *Imperialisten*, 2003: 266.

⁵⁵ BAB, R 1001/5423, Solf, Reichskolonialamt an den Gouverneur, Windhuk, 5.7.1913.

⁵⁶ BAB R 1001/5585, Britische Botschaft Berlin an das Auswärtige Amt, 11.10.1912, Bl. 5.; see also Kundrus, *Imperialisten*, 2003, 266.

⁵⁷ See, also for the following NAN, BKE 307 G 154, Kaiserliches Gouvernement für Deutsch Südwestafrika, Fiskus gegen Hillsche Erben, 1907–1914.

⁵⁸ National Archive of South Africa, GG 276 4/42, Memorandum on the Status of Natives in German South West Africa, 12.4.1911.

was an unmarried daughter of the late Charles Hill. In itself, it was very surprising that Agnes Hill could so openly assume the role of family representative in such a patriarchal settler community, as represented by German South-West Africa. Despite the male domination typical of settler colonies, it seems that it was in this type of environment that unexpected spaces sometimes opened up for women such as Agnes Hill. Especially in the south of the German colony, which was mainly comprised of distant farms and a loosely structured colonial society including German, Boers, Cape Englishmen and persons of mixed ethnic background, social and racial boundaries were rather fluid.⁵⁹ These characteristics entailed a certain room for manoeuvres that was also typical of a frontier society and would not have been available in the strictly regulated and hierarchical European society of the time. Such a phenomenon could also be observed in the case of Mrs Fish, who also engaged in negotiations with the German authorities and the British consul.⁶⁰ However, this room had to be claimed, as Agnes Hill and Mrs. Fish did. The cases demonstrate the potential ambiguity of the boundaries between “white” and “non-white”, and how these had to be negotiated beyond colonial borders.

Interactions between the metropolises

On a different level, there were also interactions to be observed between British and German authorities in the motherlands. The marriage bans and degradations that affected British citizens had often to be changed due to the interventions of the British consular and colonial staff. The German colonial administration felt unsure how to treat the cases. Thus the German Colonial Office officially asked the British embassy in Berlin, in March 1913, how the Germans should treat church weddings with mixed-race people that had been concluded before the establishment of the German colony. The request was connected with a specific case, however, the German Colonial Office wished to see a general declaration.⁶¹ The question of the validity of marriage thus occupied the British ambassador in Berlin, the German ambassador in London, and various staff of the British Foreign and Colonial Office during the following months. Count Lichnowsky, the German ambassador in London, initially wrote to Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey: He officially asked how a “bastard women”, a daughter of a British citizen and a half caste, should be treated and if the church marriage of the parents that took place in 1880

⁵⁹ NAN, ZBU 666 F IV R 2 Bd. 2, Abschrift, Kaiserliches Bezirksamt Keetmanshoop an das Kaiserliche Gouvernement Windhuk, 20.8.1910, 31–32

⁶⁰ See for example the reports on female servants who were sent to the colonies and managed to start small businesses there and to reach a far better position than they could have had in their home country, Mamozai, Martha. *Herrenmenschen. Frauen im deutschen Kolonialismus*. Hamburg 1982: 143, 147; see also Ann McClintock on the extraordinary career of Olive Schreiner McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. London, New York 1995: 258–295; see generally Gouda 1993.

⁶¹ The National Archives, Public Record Office (TNA, PRO), FO 367/328, Marriage between Englishman and Bastard women. Requests view as to validity of such a marriage in order to establish the political position of a daughter of the marriage, 8.3.1913

before the establishment of the German colony in 1884 would be seen as valid under British law. The daughter of the couple had married a German farmer. The German ambassador now asked officially if the daughter should be judged as a British woman and if the children of the new union would be classified as Europeans.⁶²

The case led to some bewilderment and confusion in London and was being discussed in the Foreign as well as in the Colonial Office. The Foreign Office tried to use marriages on the Pitcairn Islands as analogy.⁶³ However, discussions dragged on, the officials in the Foreign and Colonial Office were undecided how to proceed. Contrary to the German colonial administration, the British officials did not want to reach a fundamental decision that might have incalculable consequences. As a matter of principle, London was quite sympathetic towards a ban of mixed marriages since British policies in Africa had also changed towards segregation policies. An internal minute of the Foreign Office stated that the Germans were quite right to ban mixed marriages in their colony.⁶⁴ However, the German over-regulation was seen as highly problematic. Furthermore, the Foreign Office would never accept the degradation of British citizens even if they might be of multi-ethnic origin. All British citizens who enjoyed the status of a white person in British colonies should be protected from arbitrary decisions by the German administration. In several minutes officials remarked, that consul Müller was quite right to emphasize that point again and again.⁶⁵ After long discussions, Grey finally wrote to Lichnowsky, that the marriage would be valid according to British law, even if some doubts could not be completely removed. Grey apologized that he could not give a more decisive answer and added, that these problems had not been subject of an intensive juridical discussion in Britain so far.⁶⁶ In contrast, mixed marriages had aroused a strong debate in German colonial and legal journals, even in the daily press.

With Grey's answer of April 1913 the German colonial administration in South-West Africa had a precedent how to treat problematic cases with British citizens involved. However, as this meant to concede British or German citizenship to mixed-race people, such decisions were still often delayed by the colonial authorities of German South-West Africa.

The German administration also tried to reach reciprocity in the question of mixed marriages. What they meant was that the British administration in the Cape Colony should respect the German mixed marriage bans when Germans tried to escape the law and to marry in the neighbouring British colony.⁶⁷ They wanted to stop the "marriage tourism" to the Cape, an issue

⁶² TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, Nr. 10928 Lichnowsky, German embassy London, to Grey, Foreign Office, 6.3.1913.

⁶³ TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, Nr 4687, Reprint, the Law Officers of the Crown to Colonial Office, 27.8.1908.

⁶⁴ TNA, PRO, FO 367/ 276, Nr. 35013, Proceedings of the Landesrat GSWA, Minutes 20.8.1912.

⁶⁵ TNA, PRO, FO 367/276, Nr. 35013, Proceedings of the Landesrat GSWA, Minutes, 20.8.1912.

⁶⁶ TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, Nr.16146, Grey to Lichnowsky, German embassy London 18.4.1913.

⁶⁷ TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, 4687, Goschen to Edward Grey, 22.1.1913.

that in reality hardly existed. On the British side, the German request was seen with bewilderment.⁶⁸ In the internal discussion of the German request one reads:

I do not understand what is meant by our 'recognition' of the laws in force in the German Colonies respecting personal status and mixed marriage. I should have thought that no declaration on our part was necessary and that we recognise the right of the German Government to regulate their questions in their colonies.⁶⁹

At the same time the British ambassador in Berlin observed that in his view the German Colonial Office seemed to be quite confused about the question of mixed marriages.⁷⁰ The British government never granted the reciprocity the Germans wanted. They insisted on their former declaration that the rights of British persons could not be restricted and tried to avoid any more correspondence on the issue.⁷¹

However, the German Colonial Office still tried to regulate the whole question of mixed marriages in a comprehensive fashion. In spring 1913, they asked the British administration to forward the exact laws and decrees of the several provinces of the Union of South Africa. This demand was again greeted with slight astonishment on the British side. In July 1913 the Foreign Office enquired with the South African authorities, as all the different decrees and regulations were not known in detail in London.⁷² In the comments of the South African administration one finds a certain reluctance to answer these demands, "mixed marriages" are addressed as "vexed question". Furthermore, even the government of the Union was not quite sure about the different regulations. A first answer only reads: "My impression is that at present there is a wide diversity in the laws of the several provinces on this subject."⁷³ In November 1913, the government of the South African Union finally sent a statement to London:

The only statement that we think can be made is, that under the laws relating to marriage at present in force in Cape Colony, Natal and the Orange Free State there is no legal invalidity to a marriage between a white and coloured person. [...]⁷⁴

Only in March 1914 the information eventually reached Berlin. The long deferral of the answer points again at the reluctance of the British and South African authorities to discuss these

⁶⁸ BAB, R 1001/5418, Auswärtiges Amt an den Staatssekretär des Reichskolonialamtes, Über das Personenstands- und Mischehenrecht in den deutschen Schutzgebieten in Bezug auf englische Staatsbürger, Briefwechsel, 23.8.1913, 203.

⁶⁹ TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, Nr. 4687, Mixed marriages in German South West Africa, Minute, 31.1.1913. The next minute read: "It is rather difficult to know what the German Govt. do mean. As Sir Langley points out we recognize the right of any country to make her own laws as to status, subject to treaty stipulations. "

⁷⁰ TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, Nr. 34029, Granville to Grey, Colonial Office 18.7.1913.

⁷¹ TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, Draft, Foreign Office to Colonial Office, 9.8.1913.

⁷² TNA, PRO, FO 367/328, Undersecretary of State, Colonial Office to Undersecretary of State, Foreign Office, 20.8.1913.

⁷³ National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria, GG 278 4/158, Office of the Governor-General of South Africa, Marriages between white and coloured persons in GSWA. Request of German government to be furnished with laws and regulations regarding mixed marriages in the Union, 22.8.1913.

⁷⁴ National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria, GG 278 4/169, Office of the Governor-General of South Africa, Marriages between white and coloured persons in GSWA, 7.11.1913.

problems. The problem of the mixed marriages was obviously seen as something that should rather not be touched upon too much, official statements should rather be avoided, even if the colonial administration and the Colonial and Foreign Office were generally opposed towards these connections.

In contrast, German policy aimed at regulating the whole question in every detail. In July 1914 the German Colonial Secretary wrote a detailed despatch to governors of all German colonies, discussing the whole problem of mixed marriages, of mixed-race people and of the law of civil status in the colonies in detail.⁷⁵ A clarification was aimed at, however, the outbreak of the World War I stopped these intentions.

Conclusion

Even if the mixed marriages in question were only a few cases and seem to be rather marginal, the interactions and discussions concerning the mixed-race couples between the colonies and the empires can point at several highly important issues in the comparative analysis of colonialism.

First of all, it becomes clear to what extent the colonial subjects were trying to use the margins “between the colonies” by making use of rights conceded to them on the other side of the border. It was precisely those that were branded in the racist minds of the German colonial administrators as inferior persons with no initiative of their own, i.e. the mixed-race people, who were sounding out their opportunities, fighting for their status, employing the British consul to defend their interests and attempting to circumvent the degrading regulations of the German colonial administration.

Moreover, the controversy sheds some light on the specificity of racial policies in the two colonial empires. The German colony tried to use the ban on mixed marriages to implement an excessive, state-imposed racism, which would soon hit a wall and often ended in complete arbitrariness. The over-regulation and administration of racism in German South-West Africa seems to be a distinct phenomenon, which certainly had its roots in the radicalization of the German colony during and after the Herero and Nama War.⁷⁶ However, also in other German colonies similar regulations were introduced. On a more general level it might be partly explained with the overemphasis on race segregation in the German reception of racial theories. It also points at the late entry of Germany into the colonial sphere, when a racial order that placed the black Africans at the lowest scale of humankind was widely accepted. Such assumptions strongly influenced colonial policies of dissimilation. Germany had not experienced earlier forms of colonialism when racial theories were less omnipresent and other guiding principles

⁷⁵ BAB, R 1001/5418, Reichskolonialamt an die Gouverneure in Daressalam, Windhuk, Buea, Lome, Rabaul, Apia, 7/1914, 364–380.

⁷⁶ Zimmerer 2002, 94.

seemed to be more important.⁷⁷ On the British side, the extreme state-imposed racism introduced by the German administration was not customary. British colonial officials generally regarded the racial over-regulation in German South-West Africa with some concern.⁷⁸ The British government was not going to commit itself to inflexible regulations that could have unforeseeable consequences – even if it did, as a matter of principle, oppose mixed marriages and pursued a policy of dissimilation. Greater flexibility made decisions possible that, in practice, permitted a slightly more human policy that let more room for individual cases or allowed the ignoring of certain cases – even if the actual aims of colonial policy were not that different in both countries.

Furthermore, it becomes apparent how the two imperial powers negotiated their colonial self-definition between the challenges of the African population, the settlers, colonial administrators, and fellow imperialists. In general, one can observe that the British colonial administration as well as inhabitants of the Cape Colony certainly opposed the highly bureaucratic and rigid terms of racial policy by the Germans and used the criticism for their own self-definition as experienced and better colonizers. On the German side, the administration in German South-West Africa mostly regarded the British “native” policy as far too laissez-faire and lenient. The criticism was again used to define an own German colonial style.

Generally, analysing the interactions of the two colonizers contributes to a more precise understanding of the various entanglements of the colonial situation during European Imperialism, on the level of the individual actors in the colonies, on the level of the colonial administrations and finally on the level of the discourse within the mother countries.

Dr. Ulrike Lindner
Universität der Bundeswehr München
Fakultät für Staats- und Sozialwissenschaften
Historisches Institut
Werner-Heisenberg-Weg 39
85579 Neubiberg
Deutschland

E-Mail: ulrike.lindner@unibw.de

⁷⁷ The thesis will be outlined in my forthcoming book: Lindner, Ulrike. *Koloniale Begegnungen. Großbritannien und Deutschland als europäische Imperialmächte in Afrika 1890–1914*; see also Lindner, Ulrike. “Colonialism as a European project in Africa before 1914? British and German concepts of colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa” *Comparativ* 2009, forthcoming.

⁷⁸ TNA, PRO, FO 367/230, Consul Müller, Lüderitzbucht, to Sir Edward Grey, Memorandum re Status of natives in German South West Africa, 3.5.1911.

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